

VIRGINIA WILDLIFE

APRIL 2000

ONE DOLLAR





Director's Column

William L. Woodfin, Jr

Both in this column and in many other presentations to various groups, it always gives us a lot of pleasure to talk about the bounty of wildlife that we enjoy in Virginia. In that regard, the preliminary harvest figures for the 1999-2000 big game season are in, and once again they represent our plentiful game resource. Good harvest numbers are directly linked to good mast crops, good hatches, and sound wildlife management practices by the Department's professional staff. The figures this year were influenced by all of these factors.

The number of deer harvested was 5 percent higher than the previous season. The increases in deer harvest were statewide, except in the Southern Piedmont region where it was down approximately 1 percent. This was not surprising since either-sex deer hunting days were reduced in 14 Southern Piedmont counties and a fairly extensive Hemorrhagic Disease outbreak centered in that area occurred in late summer/early fall.

A major highlight of the 1999-2000 season took place in the southwest part of the state where we were pleased to offer deer hunting in Buchanan County for the first time in 25 years. The season

had been closed there to allow the deer population to recover and it was very rewarding to reap the benefits of that management effort.

The statewide fall turkey harvest increased 9 percent over last year. West of the Blue Ridge, the harvest increased 12 percent and East of the Blue Ridge, the harvest increased 7 percent. The turkey harvest increased significantly in several regions of the state including the North Mountain Region (53 percent), Tidewater (21 percent), and North Piedmont (10 percent).

The number of bears taken in the Commonwealth dipped slightly, still coming in at less than 1 percent under the record harvest last year. Hunters reported seeing more bears and more sign of bears than in previous years. Mild weather during the hunting season and adequate food influenced their late den entry this past fall.

This information about harvest figures would not be complete without talking a bit on hunting safety. At the many outdoor shows and other speaking engagements presented by our staff, we constantly seek to remind hunters of safe firearm handling, of safe use of tree stands, and to always abide by our game



laws including blaze orange requirements. We want people to experience safe and enjoyable days in the outdoors. When you think about the number of hunters afield and the relatively few hunting incidents that occur, it becomes evident that the vast majority of hunters use safe hunting practices. However, we would like to see zero incidents out there, and with just a little extra care and caution while in the fields and forests, that is what we can achieve.

At this time of year, we know that spring is right around the corner. We hope you have a good spring gobbler season, and again, we ask you to hunt safely.

| | 1996-97 | 1997-98 | 1998-99 | 1999-2000 |
|--------|---------|---------|---------|-----------|
| Deer | 209,743 | 198,561 | 178,528 | 188,757 |
| Bear | 624 | 788 | 914 | 906 |
| Turkey | 11,870 | 11,251 | 8,802 | 9,596 |

Mission Statement

To manage Virginia's wildlife and inland fish to maintain optimum populations of all species to serve the needs of the Commonwealth; to provide opportunity for all to enjoy wildlife, inland fish, boating and related outdoor recreation; to promote safety for persons and property in connection with boating, hunting and fishing.

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Color separations and printing by
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Virginia Wildlife (ISSN 0042 6792) is published monthly by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries. Send all subscription orders and address changes to *Virginia Wildlife*, P. O. Box 7477, Red Oak, Iowa 51591-0477. Address all other communications concerning this publication to *Virginia Wildlife*, P.O. Box 11104, 4010 West Broad Street, Richmond, Virginia 23230-1104. Subscription rate is \$10.00 for one year, \$24.00 for three years; \$1.00 per each back issue, subject to availability. Out-of-country rates are the same but must be paid in U.S. funds. To subscribe, call toll-free (800) 710-9369. Postmaster: Please send all address changes to *Virginia Wildlife*, P.O. Box 7477, Red Oak, Iowa 51591-0477. Postage for periodicals paid at Richmond, Virginia and additional entry offices.

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Do you have that springtime itch to explore some place really wild? Check out *Dragon Run* found on page 19.

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Cover: Wild turkey (*Melegris gallopavo*) is the largest North American game bird. ©Scotty Lovett.

Back cover: Illustration by Norman Raynock.

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Dedicated to the Conservation of Virginia's Wildlife and Natural Resources

VOLUME 61

NUMBER 4



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Putting Something Back

by Denny Quaiff

The 45 miles of road to Amelia County during the dark early morning hours didn't seem quite as long. It was Monday, the second day of the 1999 spring gobbler season, and I had taken an 18-pound longbeard on the traditional Saturday opener. I was scheduled to meet Jeff DeRusha and Steve Fritton at one of the gates to our hunt club property. Jeff had bought the guided turkey hunt at the Virginia Deer Hunters Association's (VDHA) Annual Fall Banquet, which Steve donates each year.

With a good half-hour left before legal shooting time, I sent Jeff and Steve to an area where I had heard several gobblers during my pre-season scouting trips. Feeling good about their chances and thinking maybe we could make it a double, I headed to another section of the property hoping to fill my second tag.

At first light the gobblers were sounding off in every direction. I had heard seven different toms and pinpointed two that were close enough to hunt from where I was standing. The turkeys would answer every time I called. So I decided to shut up and wait. However, when they flew off the roost they went the other way. Determined to take advantage of the two gobblin' toms, I made a move for another setup. After a series of calls, the turkeys didn't seem to be very interested. They would answer, but didn't seem to be moving in my direction. All of a sudden both gobblers really got cranked up, walking straight away from me. Within five minutes a shot rang out over the next hill.

So there I sat, scratching my head, and wondering what was going on. Who had come in the backdoor? No one except Jeff and Steve should have been in this area and they were nowhere close. Could it have been a poacher? Had one of the other club members crossed the creek? When the story finally unfolded, Jeff and Steve had not been able to get setup on any of the turkeys they had heard from the roost. After walking and calling they had heard the gobblers that I had been working since daylight. Not knowing that I had already setup on the two toms, Steve

Today, Virginia's wild turkey population is flourishing. Wildlife biologists, game wardens, conservation groups, and hunters have helped to make a difference throughout the restoration years.



©Denny Quaiff

Calling a mature gobbler into shotgun range, during the spring gobbler hunting season, can be a challenge for even the most accomplished hunter.

nto the Resource

started calling and Jeff harvested a beautiful 21-pound Virginia long-beard. Jeff told me later that Steve was working the diaphragm and slate call at the same time. And believe me I have witnessed Steve Fritton in action before. If there was ever a turkey hunter who knew how to get a gobbler excited it was this master woodsman. Whenever I play any game and get beat by the best it's not so hard to take and I still managed to fill my second tag in 1999.

Steve Fritton has been hunting turkeys for more than 30 years and he is an active member of the National Wild Turkey Federation

(NWTF). He has also served as President of the Virginia State Chapter, as well as the Richmond Chapter. Steve feels fortunate to have held these positions and says, "Being an officer in the NWTF has allowed me the opportunity to meet and exchange information on turkeys, turkey hunters, and turkey hunting with many people from all different walks of life."

Like many serious turkey hunters, Steve has been a turkey calling competitor. He has won and placed in calling contests in the states of Maryland, West Virginia, North Carolina, and Virginia.

Steve is a physical education teacher at John Tyler Community College. During turkey season he arranges his classes around his hunting schedule. Over the past 15 years he has only missed two days of hunting during the spring gobbler season and rarely carries a gun. The thrill of turkey hunting to Steve is calling. During the 1999

spring season, while hunting in 12 different Virginia counties, Steve called in 18 gobblers that hunters harvested.

Over the past 10 years, Steve has been sharing his turkey hunting skills by donating fall and spring turkey hunts for local fund raising banquets. The groups include the Richmond Chapter of NWTF, Torsen

Peterson Chapter of NWTF, Stoney Creek Chapter of NWTF and the Virginia Deer Hunters Association. In 25 different auctions during this time period, Steve estimates over \$8,000 has been raised for wildlife resources. In many cases he has

assisted hunters in successfully harvesting their first ever turkey.

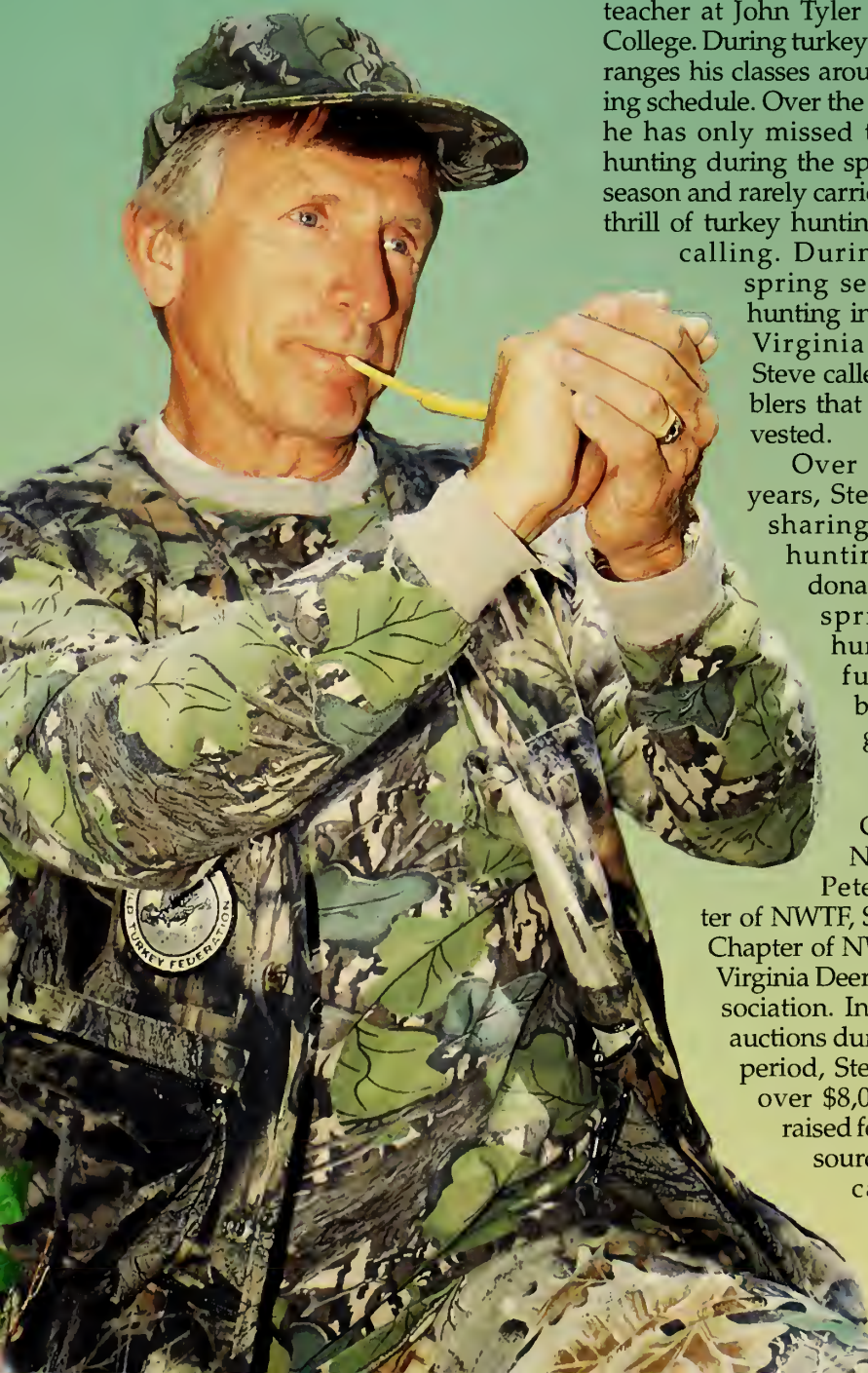
Another active member of the NWTF and past president of the Richmond Chapter is Reed Schweckert. Reed calls Steve Fritton, "Mr. Virginia Wild Turkey." Reed, who has known Steve for over 20 years, says, "Steve's calling ability is uncanny. But the one thing that stands out the most in my mind about Steve is his willingness to spread his knowledge of the wild turkey." Reed went on to say, "A lot of successful hunters keep all of their tricks to themselves, but Steve is a teacher and enjoys watching others learn from his experiences."

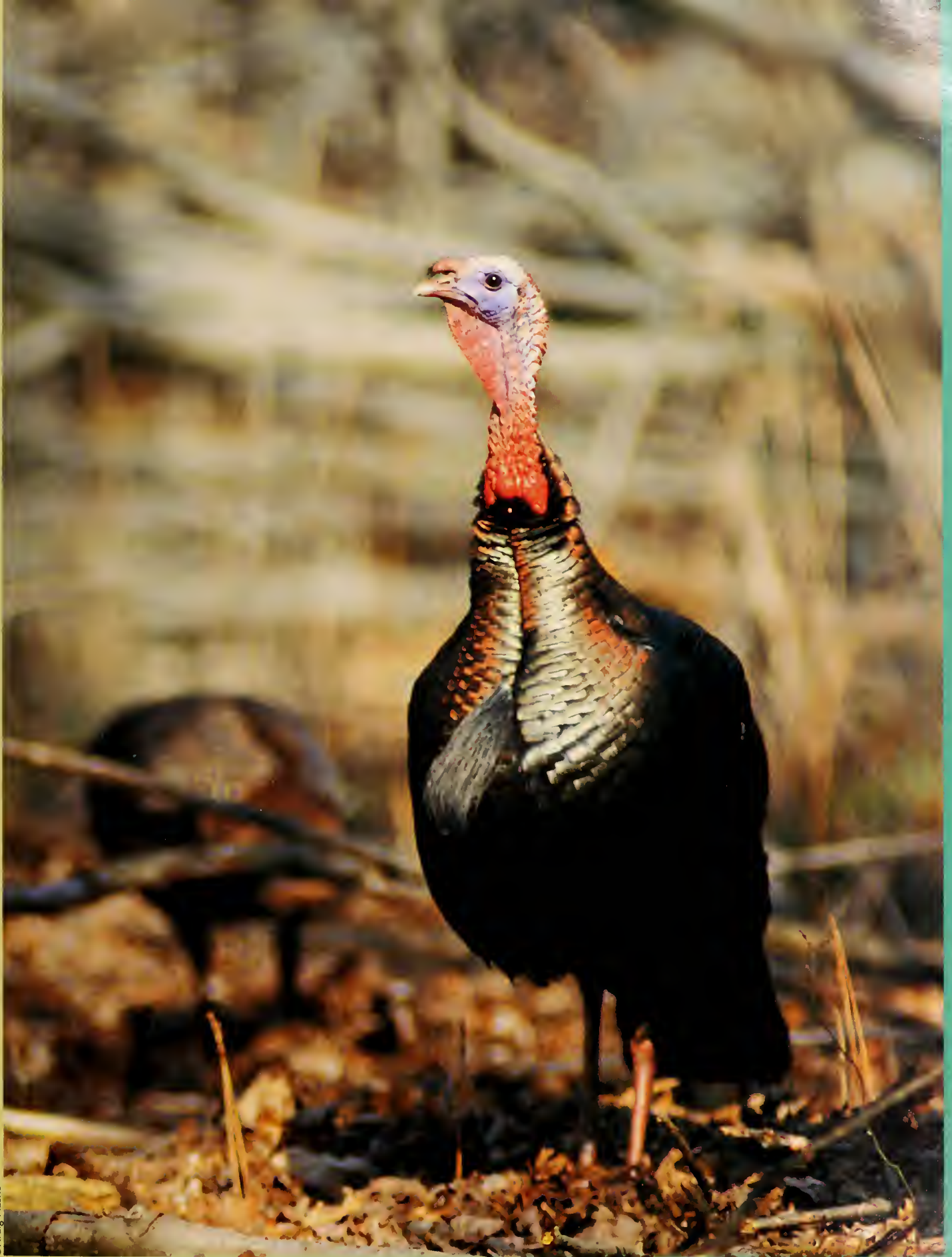
When it comes to teaching, Steve has taught and assisted in many turkey hunting seminars. At the 1999 Virginia Outdoor Sportsman Show, Steve held a seminar each day providing a wealth of information to all of those who attended.

Charlie Luck is a well respected local businessman and outdoorsman. Luck, who has hunted big game all over North America and Africa, purchased a Steve Fritton Turkey Hunt at the VDHA Fall Banquet several years ago. Charlie, who harvested a beautiful spring gobbler while hunting with Fritton, said, "Steve used a turkey wing to imitate the early morning fly-down sound of a hen turkey before calling. It set the stage for a very exciting spring hunt." Charlie continued, "That guy is one of the most dedicated hunters I have ever known and will help carry the sport of turkey hunting to our next generation."

Seventy-six-year-old Alfred B. "Happy" Hunter has been hunting with Steve for years and says, "When it comes to calling, Steve knows when to pour-it-on and when to use his famous "shut-up" call. He just has a knack for knowing what to do."

Steve Fritton (left) has been turkey hunting for over 30 years and has tried to learn as much as he can about these elusive game birds. Using a handmade wing bone call, Steve finds that talking turkey takes practice.





©Craig Haske

Bob Duncan, Chief of Wildlife for the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF), has also hunted with Fritton. In 1999 Duncan harvested a fall turkey, while hunting with Steve and his well trained turkey dogs. Duncan said, "I have introduced Steve to members of the DGIF Board as one of the most knowledgeable turkey hunters in the Commonwealth." Duncan went on to say that, "Steve is one of the most serious, dedicated, and woods-wise turkey hunters I have ever known. This man has given more than his share back to the challenging and growing sport of turkey hunting."

Steve has traveled the southeast coast and much of the state of Virginia in pursuit of the eastern wild turkey. He likes to brag on the Old Dominion and feels that we are blessed with an outstanding Game Department, which has helped to provide a model turkey program resulting in an abundant eastern wild turkey population throughout the state. After hunting in many different states, he feels that the Virginia wild turkeys are the wildest and consistently the most challenging to pursue.

Steve enjoys fall and spring hunting equally and must be considered a master at both. He believes that Virginia, with one of the most liberal fall seasons in the country, provides



©Denny Quaiff

Using the feathers of a turkey wing, to imitate the early morning fly-down sounds of a hen turkey will often grab the attention of a weary old gobbler. With a lot of hard work and devotion hunters, like Steve Fritton and Jeff DeRusha, are not only rewarded with a great outdoor experience, but also with the memory of a hunt that will last a lifetime.

turkey hunters with a well-deserved bonus. Steve feels that fall hunting allows hunters to engage in conversation with more turkeys (especially hens), which will help improve spring hunting skills.

Steve Fritton has made turkey hunting a serious part of his life. He promotes both fall and spring turkey hunting equally and is quick to say, "I don't care if it's a 20-pound gobbler in the spring or a 10-pound hen in the fall. If you were calling to these turkeys in either situation and bagged one, then you have had an unforgettable experience. And in both situations these were trophy hunts."

Having the opportunity of knowing and sharing some hunting experiences with Steve Fritton has been this writer's good fortune. When I asked Steve if there was any one thing that stands out most during the thousands of hours over the 30 plus years he has spent in the turkey woods, his final comment was, "It's a different day every day." □

Denny Quaiff is the senior editor of Whitetail Times, the official magazine of the Virginia Deer Hunters Association and enjoys hunting deer and turkey in Virginia.



©Denny Quaiff



Class In The Woods

For over 50 years the Virginia Department of Forestry has been offering a special program that's aimed at making young students better stewards of our natural resources.



©Dwight Dyke



by Emily M. Grey

It's 6:00 a.m. in late June near the path of General Lee's Retreat. A recording of reveille blasts through the air. Instead of getting the boot, recruits will spend an eventful week at Forestry Camp. Through hands-on experiences, these enlistees will discover wise-use techniques of our lands and streams.

For over 50 years, 14 through 16-year-olds from all over the Commonwealth have assembled at the lovely Holiday Lake 4-H Education Center. Within the 20,000-acre Appomattox-Buckingham State Forest, professional foresters, wildlife biologists, and resource specialists conduct outdoor classes. Counselors constantly interact with students



©E. M. Grey

and help them assimilate the wealth of new knowledge.

"I hope to return next year as a CIT (Counselor in Training)," says Bryan Eckstein, an 11th grader from Rockingham County. "This camp gives great exposure to forestry. It is also a place to make good connections."

"I like the opportunity to meet new people," adds Michelle Hurd, a 10th grader from Washington County.

At this unusual assemblage, these young Virginians learn how to make insightful decisions as future leaders and landowners. Whether they pursue a career in forestry or a related field, these students leave Holliday Lake (whose spelling is different from the education center) as advocates of the state's natural resources.



©E. M. Grey

Students who attend the Virginia Forestry Camp will experience a host of unique educational opportunities like Environmental Protection, Forest Management, Tree Identification, and Wildlife Management. What makes this camp different? The students have a chance to receive hands-on instruction. Many of the classes reveal new and exciting discoveries, like sampling streams for aquatic life.

"This is the longest, continuously running camp in the state," says Richard Pulliam, 4-H Center Director. "This program gives a practical view of the outside and stresses the importance of becoming good stewards. With an appreciation of what it takes to sustain natural resources, these camp participants will be wise consumers and be able to influence their congressional representatives."

Participants are selected from nominations presented by teachers, Environthon coaches, 4-H and Scout



©E. M. Grey

©Dwight Dyke

leaders, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, forestry and wildlife professionals, and Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF) staff. Campers are required to be in good academic standing and not be previous attendees.

Sponsored by the VDOF, the program is funded by conservation associations, forest industries, individuals, and government agencies like the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF). All of the approximately 100 candidates receive scholarships amounting to two-thirds the

years. "Now, we are getting more urban kids. This could be their first time in the woods and closeup with nature."

Virginia may be the only state which hosts such a unique curriculum taught by a diversity of instructors. Mandatory courses include Environmental Protection, Forest Management, Mensuration, Reproducing the Forest, Timber Harvesting-Wildlife Management, Tree Identification, Insects and Diseases, and a Logging Field Trip to a local mill.

Listen up! Tests are given at the



©D. Coffman

cost of food, accommodations and materials. Enrollees pay a mere \$35 registration fee.

Each camper is given an introductory notebook which lists the daily timetable, brief course outlines and names of staff, instructors, counselors, and students, and other pertinent information. A particular written code of conduct is stressed and enforced at this honors camp. With the varied and non-stop agenda, there is no time for mischief.

After a hearty breakfast, students attend classes from 7:30 through 11:30 each morning. Four sections have no more than 25 people. Everyone is expected to be appropriately dressed, equipped, and on time.

"The program used to cater to budding farmers and rural residents," says Fire Warden and Assistant Camp Director Ken Mohler, who has noticed a trend over the

Teaching forest stewardship, environmental responsibility, and how to have fun in the outdoors have combined to make the Forestry Camp an educational success.

end of each class. Students are asked to evaluate their courses. As an incentive to perform one's best, hunting, fishing, hiking, camping, and sports equipment is awarded for highest grades and sports competitions.

"This camp will benefit my ecology team skills," explains Debra McCollum, a Halifax ninth grader. "I like learning all aspects of the woods, such as how to prevent erosion and measure trees."

A group stood safely back as foresters simulated how to proficiently extinguish a woods fire. With a few precision cuts, loggers demonstrated how to properly fell trees.



©E. M. Grey



©Dwight Dyke



Things really start heating up (above) when students are exposed to examples of forestry management practices, like how to safely put out a woods fire and timber harvesting (right).

Except for the experts, it is likely that most people haven't a clue about these skillful procedures.

"It is fun to do things that real foresters do, such as build a fire line," volunteers Jake Braford, a Prince Edward County 10th grader.

The docket has borrowed ideas, like offering elective courses from DGIF's successful BOW (Becoming An Outdoors Woman) workshops. Field trips and optional sessions, which include Forest History, High Ropes, Save Our Streams, and Wilderness Survival are scheduled for afternoons.

There is ample time for recreational swimming, volleyball, soft-



©E. M. Grey

ball, and shopping in the camp store. After supper everyone reflects on the day's activities.

"I appreciate this time because for 20 minutes I can review what I have learned," declares Jenny Runniger, a Richmond County 11th grader.

Lumberjack Field Day competitions are held later in the week. Rival teams practice sawing, rolling logs, and other contests.

There are special evening programs. Spectators watched spellbound as a bloodhound, named Levi, tracked a missing person in just a few minutes. Later, the canine's owner and a Chief Forest Warden, Mike Armstrong, gave a slide presentation about his companion's work, which often involves arson investigations.

"I wish that the classes and camp would last longer because I am interested in numerous activities," says Abdul Mahmond, a ninth grade Fairfax County student, originally from Somalia. "This is my first learning experience in the outdoors."

"This camp is about character development," opines Richard Puliam. "Where else can you go and see kids in this age range enjoying the outdoors and participating in new experiences?" □

Emily Grey is an active freelance outdoor writer and an attorney from Onancock, Virginia. She also holds a Master of Science Degree in Fisheries and Wildlife Management from Virginia Tech.

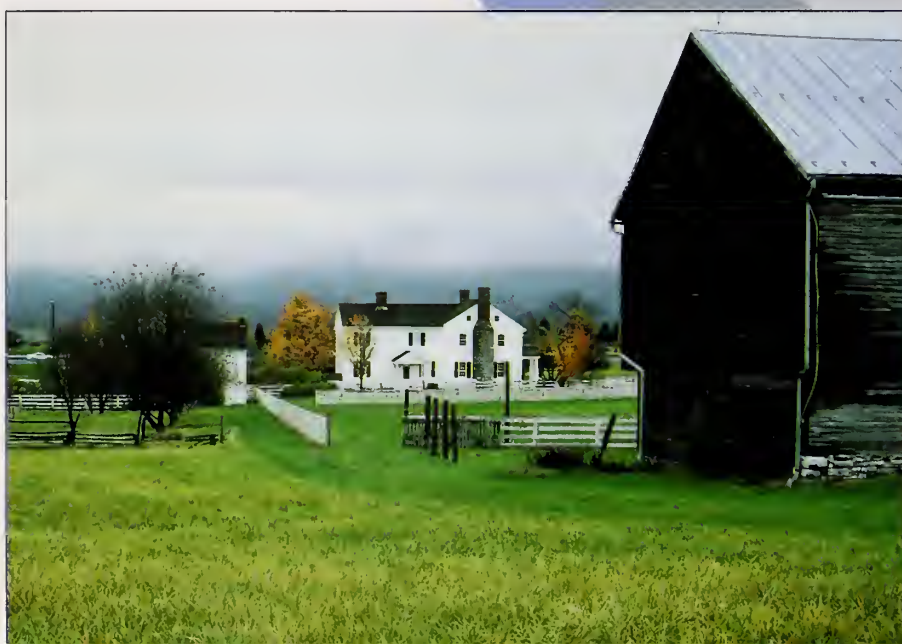
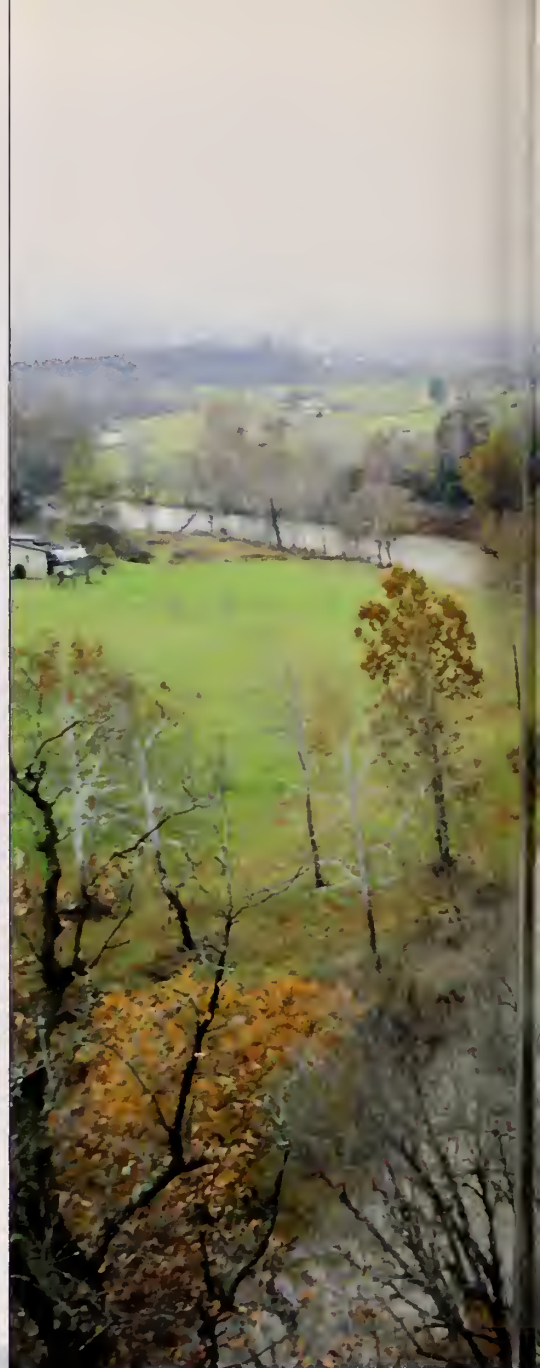
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Charlottesville, VA 22903
(804) 977-6555, ext. 3538 or 3342
E-mail: www.dof.state.va.us/hlfc.htm

Rivers of Blue, Forests of Gray

Virginia's Shenandoah
River offers a little
something for everyone.

story & photos by King Montgomery



When the roll is called at Virginia Military Institute (VMI) in Lexington every May 15, all cadets are present except for 10. When their names are called, a cadet representative from the company in which each served answers: "Died on the field of honor, Sir." The "field of honor" was the farm and orchard where the Battle of New Market was fought in 1864. There, Southern

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forces under Major General John C. Breckinridge, formerly a vice president of the United States and a member of the U.S. Senate from Kentucky when war broke out, faced veteran Federal regiments under Major General Franz Sigel. Among his Virginia infantry and cavalry regiments, Breckinridge had a small, untested reserve: 257 cadets from VMI, most in their teens, some only 14 years old. Their story is part

Beyond the cliffs (above) lies the Bushong Farm, the scene of the Battle of New Market which took place on May 15, 1864. The Locust Grove Inn (left), near Luray, is on the South Fork of the Shenandoah River. The Brumback family lived here in the 1860s. All four sons fought for the South during the American Civil War.

of the Shenandoah and of the state of Virginia itself.

Today, as then, the North Fork of the Shenandoah River flows just below a steep wooded cliff alongside the battlefield. Accustomed to turmoil and change, life and death,

C. S. A.

 MAY 15, 1864
 RIGHT FLANK
 OF LIEUT-
 COLONEL
 GEORGE M.
 EDGAR'S 26TH
 VA. INFANTRY
 BATTALION,
 2:00 P. M.
 425 MEN.

the river rolls steadily on from its source at Little North Mountain to its meeting with the South Fork of the Shenandoah River at Front Royal. The combined river continues through the valley until it enters the Potomac River at Harpers Ferry, West Virginia.

The South Fork too has been a silent witness to drama and tragedy. East of New Market, just over the Massanutten Mountain, lies the Locust Grove Inn, on the banks of the South Fork and about three miles from Luray. Now a popular bed and breakfast, with over 50 acres of meadowland and trees, the Inn was once a farmhouse, originally built around 1765. In the 1860s, the Brumback family lived here. The elder Brumback and his four sons, Joseph, Dallas, Isaac Newton, and James, farmed the land and raised some cows and horses, while Mrs. Brumback tended the vegetable and flower garden. When the winds of war blew in from over the Blue Ridge, the sons left their home on the South Fork to join Virginia regiments of the Confederate Army. Their story, too, tracks the flow of the Shenandoah River, and ends along its banks.

The drums are quiet now, the cannon still, and beside the river, the gray shadows in the woods come from the light slanting through the trees, not from Confederate soldiers. The twin forks of the river, like the two ways of life embodied in the North and South of our past, flow on to become one. Separate and together, they have much to offer.

The North Fork

The smaller of the two branches of the Shenandoah, the North Fork, starts slowly where several streams and runs converge near Chimney Rock at Little North Mountain. Following the western side of the Massanutten Mountain, the river grows as it winds its way northeast, curls into the famous Seven Bends at Woodstock, then turns east to meet the South Fork above Front Royal.

The North Fork looks more like a large trout stream than the superb



The Shenandoah River is renowned for its smallmouth bass fishing. Jim Hickey (bottom right), a local guide, enjoys fly fishing for these "bronze bullets." Large dry flies, like this red double Humper (above), take smallmouth bass as well as sunfish.

warmwater fishery. Smallmouth bass, rock bass, various other sunfish, and channel catfish comprise the main game species. It is also home to some largemouth bass, crappie, and muskellunge that lurk in the deep holes caused by the dams near Edinburg, Woodstock, and Front Royal. The Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF) has stocked walleye; most are caught in the stretch of river between Strasburg and Front Royal.

Although canoes, rafts, and float tubes are a great way to fish when water conditions and levels allow, I prefer to wade. In the early spring and late fall, you'll need waders or hip boots, but during the summer when the water warms up, wet-wading is the way to go. Wading lets you cover the water more thoroughly, and the feel of the water on bare legs connects you more with the pulse of the river and the natural surroundings. The DGIF access



point below The Inn at Narrow Passage, once Stonewall Jackson's headquarters, on Route 11 south of Woodstock, is a great place to start your wade or launch a raft or canoe; other public boat access places are also available along the North Fork.

The quiet of the river today contrasts with the battle fought at nearby New Market over 130 years ago. Federal fire had cut a hole in the line of Virginians, and Breckinridge reluctantly plugged it with the only available reserve: the cadets of VMI. Initially pinned down by the raking fire, the cadets rose as one and moved out smartly on line as if on parade toward the enemy. Their brave example stirred the adjacent commands, and the whole Confederate line, without signal or order, surged forward together and drove the Yankees from the field. But the withering fire had taken a toll. When the fog of battle cleared, 55 VMI cadets were down, hit by bullet,

shell, and grapeshot; 10 would never get up again.

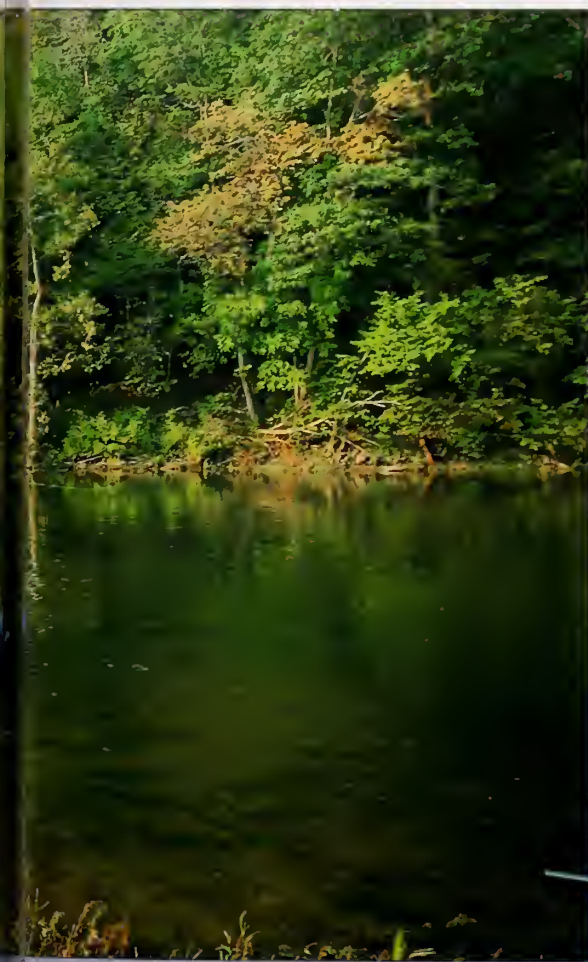
The South Fork

Great angling and compelling history come together on the South Fork of the Shenandoah too; recently I experienced both. On one excursion, I stood at the headwaters of the South Fork at the confluence of the North River and the South River, near Port Republic. Billy Kingsley, owner of the Blue Ridge Angler fly shop in Harrisonburg, inflated two Water Master kick-rafts at the DGIF boat launch there, and we were soon bobbing along with the gentle current, fly rods in hand.

Along the way, we witnessed several hatches of aquatic insects, mayflies and caddisflies, and watched swallows, sparrows, and blackbirds catch the insects in the air as they took wing. We cast poppers, streamers, and weighted nymphs, and caught at least five different species of fish: smallmouth and largemouth bass, redbreast sunfish, bluegill, and river chub, the latter looking like colorful little harlequin clowns.

On another excursion, I fished with Jim and Jenny Hickey, proprietors of Turkey Mountain Outfitters in Sperryville. This husband-wife team guide on the Thornton River, Shenandoah National Park trout streams, the upper James River, or the South Fork of the Shenandoah, and teach people how to fly fish. On this trip, we used the Hickey's Achilles raft, launching at the DGIF Whitehouse public boat launch site on Route 211 west of Luray.

Massanutten Mountain loomed out of the early morning mist, and the ripples danced with reflected light from the rising sun. Jim pulled at the long oars while Jenny and I cast sinking and floating flies, respectively. We caught redbreast sunfish,



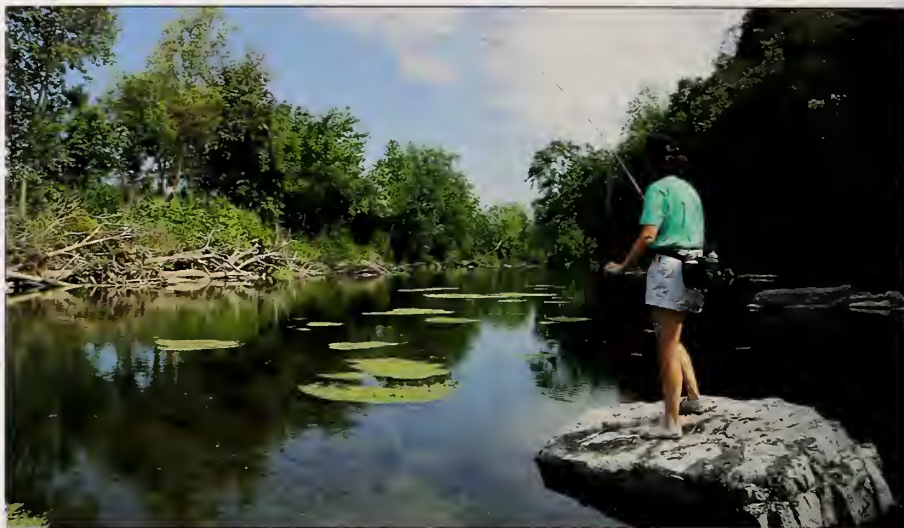
bluegills, and some nice small-mouth bass, several up to three pounds. The larger smallies came on a Condor fly, a top water concoction of pale blue foam and feathers that Jim designed for big brown trout in Chile's Patagonian rivers, where the Hickeys guide in the South American summer (our winter). These flies have proven equally effective on Virginia bass.

We pulled the raft out a few miles downriver at the DGIF Massanutten ramp. The slanting light caused shifting shadows deep in the forests along the river that contrasted with the still blue water and conjured up ghosts from the past. Not far from here, over a century ago, a saddened Brumback family had carried young Isaac Newton Brumback to a little knoll that overlooked the river, and laid him to rest in the ground he had been raised on. He had fallen at the Battle of Brandy Station on June 9, 1863, while riding with Major General J.E.B. Stuart in the largest cavalry battle ever to take place in the Americas.

Convergence of North and South

From the convergence north of Front Royal, where the two forks meet, the Shenandoah continues along its course to join the Potomac River at Harpers Ferry. Here, too, you'll find good fishing, in both the Shenandoah and the Potomac rivers, and here too you'll find reminders of a dramatic past. The arsenals and military garrisons located at Harpers Ferry played major roles in the early history of our country and of the Old Dominion. Once part of Virginia, Harpers Ferry now belongs to West Virginia, formed during the American Civil War as politics split the state.

The DGIF ramp at Whitehouse Landing on Route 211 west of Luray is a good place to access the South Fork of the Shenandoah River. During the summer months the river offers anglers and those who just want to cool off a great place to wade.



We Virginians are fortunate to have such wonderful places full of natural beauty and historical significance. As you fish the waters of the Shenandoah or stroll along its banks, think of all that has happened there through the centuries. Without our remembrances, it's just another pretty river. □

King Montgomery, a frequent contributor to Virginia Wildlife, is a retired Army officer who lives in Annandale.

Fishing and Boating Information: write VDGIF, P.O. Box 11104, Richmond, VA 23230-1104 and ask for the *Virginia Boating Guide*, which lists all the boat ramps and public access points on Virginia waters; and ask for the *Freshwater Fishing Guide*,

which gives you information on fishing in the Old Dominion.

Maps: A great river atlas is available by calling The Friends of the Shenandoah River (540) 636-4938 or The Friends of the North Fork Shenandoah (540) 459-8550.

DeLorme's *Virginia Atlas & Gazetteer* offers an excellent topographic map source. Call 1-800-569-8332


Historical Sights: The Virginia Military Institute, Lexington, 1-800-767-4207, <http://www.vmi.edu>.

There are two museums at New Market, one private, the other part of the National Park service. You can walk the battlefield at the latter. Both are worth the visit.



Dragon Run





It's nice to know that
there are still
wild places where
you can tease your
imagination and
warm your heart.

by Sally Mills

Every now and again it makes good business sense to hike up your blue jeans and spend a day in one of Virginia's spectacular wilderness areas—especially if it's your job to help steward such places. And that's why a group of Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF) staff members, accompanied by Director Bill Woodfin, headed off to canoe the Dragon Run



©Rob Simpson



©Dwight Dyke

Swamp one cool and crisp spring morning last year.

"The Dragon" is known throughout the Coastal Plain and beyond for its wild and untamed treasures. Its fauna and flora are so varied and rare, in fact, the area was named first in ecological value in the Commonwealth by the Smithsonian Institute. Com-

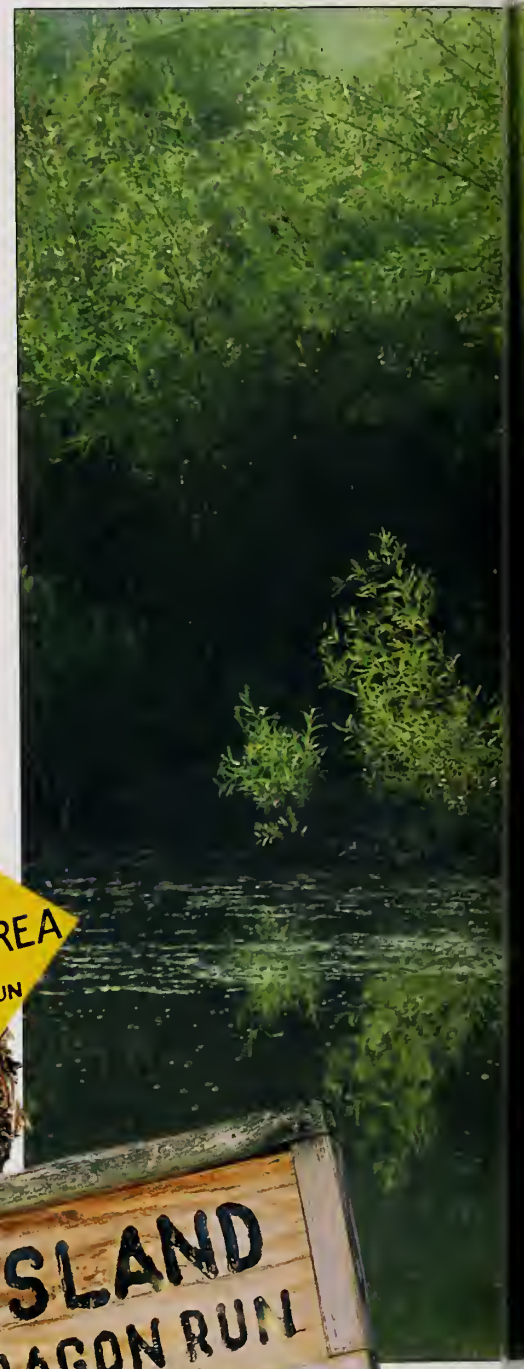


Lee Walker

Wildlife species, (left) like the brilliantly colored prothonotary warbler (*Protonotaria citrea*), thrive along the Dragon Run. For the adventure minded, a canoe trip (above) can be a tranquil experience on the Dragon Run. Paddlers should come prepared. Reserve plenty of paddle time to allow for fishing, watching wildlife, and navigating around obstacles like fallen trees and beaver dams. For safety, personal flotation devices that are worn around the waist and inflated were used by canoeists on this trip.



Lee Walker



monly seen by those who visit here are white-tailed deer, squirrel, turkey, and waterfowl. Sharing the swamp with them are otters, muskrats, raccoons, hawks, owls, and songbirds, like the prothonotary warbler, whose persistent tune serenades visitors as it darts among the underbrush.

Plants like turtlehead, wild iris, and cardinal flower grow under a thick mantle of hardwoods. Pumpkin ash and river birch rub limbs against the majestic bald cypress along the water's edge, providing shade and cover to chain

The dark, tea-colored water of the Dragon Run (left) offers anglers a chance to catch species like largemouth bass, crappie, and pickerel. Much of the credit for keeping this unique water system clean and natural goes to Friends of Dragon Run. Their efforts have provided public awareness for preserving this unique natural resource, so in the future all may enjoy its beauty.



©Dwight Dyke

pickerel, smallmouth bass, and a smorgasbord of other fish that frequent the 35-mile stretch of this freshwater system.

Those 35 miles don't run straight, mind you. An "ink spot" would be a more accurate description of how the river pans out in many directions and, during periods of low flow, defies clear channel identification. Many a colorful story has been told among fishermen and hunters

of the most capable outdoorsmen getting lost here. Or, of avid paddlers tired of portaging their canoe over the latest crop of downed branches (courtesy of a prolific beaver population) who spend an unplanned night under the stars.

To make the water adventure just a little less challenging a local conservation group, Friends of Dragon Run, maintains a series of directional signs along the main channel.

Also posted throughout the swamp are diamond-shaped signs that indicate conservation areas, and instructional signs with common-sense safety messages. It's just one of many tasks the group undertakes.

Formed originally to help protect this wilderness, Friends of Dragon Run are still busy acquiring conservation easements throughout the swamp. Through a series of workshops, they educate interested



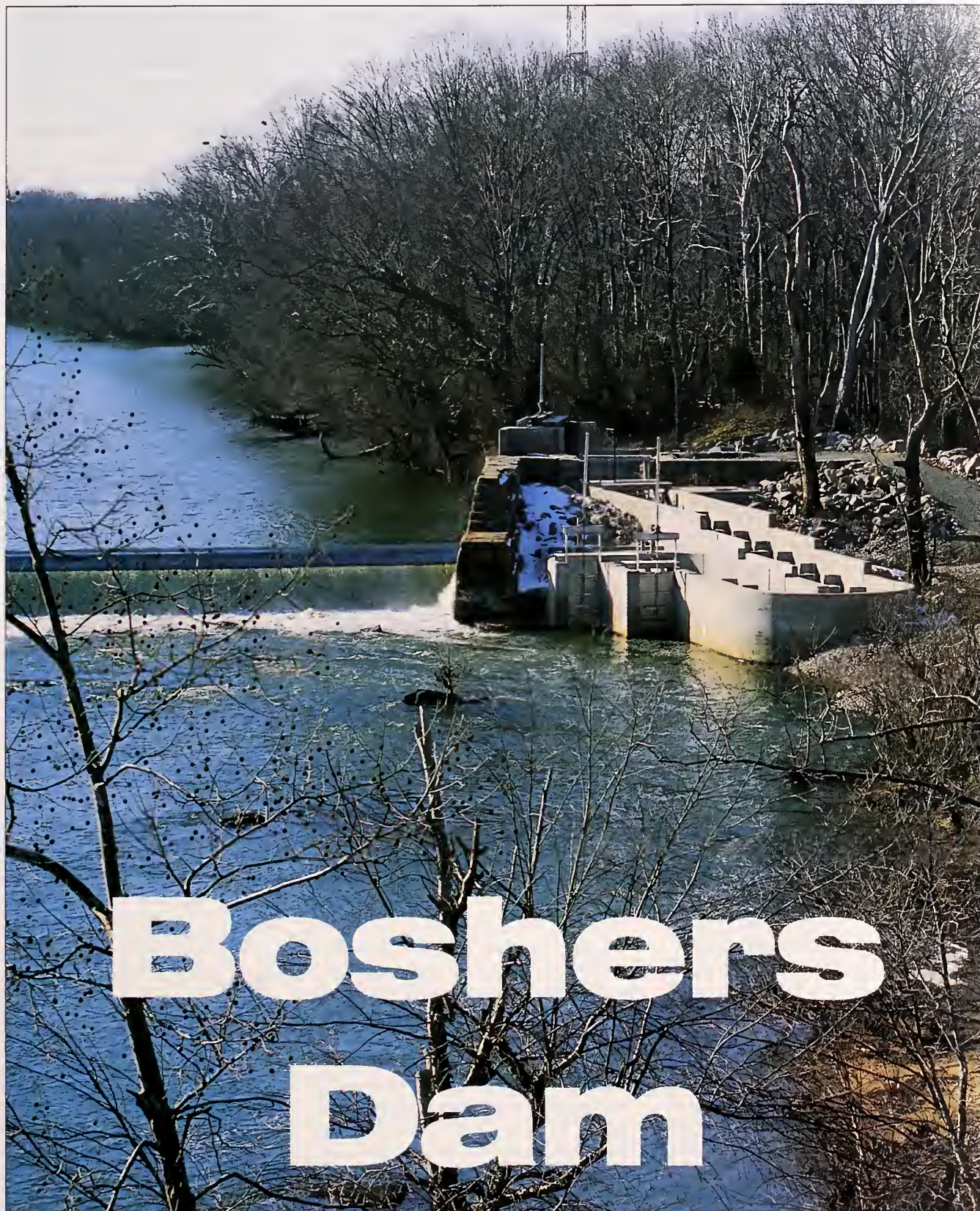
landowners about the potential benefits of conserving family-owned land in this manner. The organization also teams up with VDGIF and others in their education efforts. With the help of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, this past year they conducted guided canoe trips for students in the Peasley Middle School Environmental Club. And, although it is not a primary part of their mission, the Friends has been enhancing habitat by placing nesting boxes for ducks and, most recently, for prothonotary warblers (who've become the swamp mascot of sorts).

To anyone who has spent a timeless day in the Dragon, these stewardship efforts do not go unappreciated. The raw beauty and wild spirit of the place inspire respect and a healthy dose of humility. For information on how you can get involved, contact: Friends of Dragon Run, P.O. Box 882, Gloucester, VA 23061. □

Sally Mills has a Masters Degree in professional writing and is editor and graphic designer of the Virginia Marine Resource Bulletin. When she's not putting to paper the virtues of Virginia's magnificent natural resources, she can be found kayaking along the tranquil waters of the Mattaponi and Pamunkey rivers.



For those who visit the Dragon Run, sightings like this river otter (above), will remind us that we are only guests in this delicate ecosystem and for it to remain this way the only things we should take from it should be our memories.



Lee Walker

FISHWAY

There's a cry along the James River and it's calling out "go west young shad, go west."



Robert B. Augustine III

Then, in 1993, William's Island Dam was notched leaving the 10-foot high Boshers Dam as the last impediment to passage, still confronting and blocking migrating fish. But why is passage at these dams so important?

Severe declines of herring and shad populations are partly due to the loss of access to critical spawning habitat caused by dam construction. Building fishways works toward reversing negative trends and increases available habitat that directly benefits targeted species. In addition to fish passage, Virginia's



Robert B. Augustine III

by L. Alan Weaver

March 1, 1999, belongs in the Virginia history books under "Environmental Restoration." On this day, the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF) opened the fishway at Boshers Dam on the James River for its inaugural spawning run. As the head gate inched its way upward and the water finally began flowing, there was a great sense of accomplishment shared by a large team of cooperators. The vertical slot fishway

was finally complete and anadromous fish, such as American shad, could once again access their historical spawning grounds west of the City of Richmond. Not since 1823 could migrating fish swim past Boshers Dam! To say that reopening the river was long overdue would surely be one of the first understatements of the new millennium.

The work of creating new fish passages in the James River began in Richmond, back in 1989 when Manchester and Brown's Island dams were breached by explosives. Belle Isle Dam was "naturally" breached during a previous storm.



"American Shad Restoration Project" stocks fry annually to aid in replenishing the species in the upper James River. The overall goal is to restore populations to, or at least near, historic levels. Supplemental stocking and natural fish reproduction in historical habitat (i.e., above Boshers Dam Fishway) are co-dependent phases of the restoration effort.

Virginia joined the other Bay jurisdictions in the 1987 Chesapeake Bay Agreement that embarked on an effort to reopen a total of 1,365 miles of spawning habitat in the Bay

tion of the Chesapeake Bay. As a bonus, approximately 200 miles of James River tributaries upstream of Boshers Dam are also now accessible to migratory spawners.

This project began when the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Hydraulic Engineering Department provided conceptual plans based on flow data and surveys provided by Department staff. Final engineering and design was done by J.K. Timmons and Associates and was funded by a Chesapeake Bay Program, Environmental Protection Agency, and National Oceanographic Atmo-

money went into this project with an overall price tag of approximately \$1.5 million. Due to the broad spectrum of participants, this project is a great demonstration of how a strong public-private partnership can accomplish a monumental and worthy task.

Like so many construction projects, this one had its share of setbacks. The lowest construction bid received in September 1996 was twice the original budget! It was no small feat for the James River Association, the City, and the Department, working as a special team, to



Boshers Dam Fishway is designed to allow fish moving upstream to enter through a pool (left) that diverts water at the base of the dam. Once they enter, the fish begin a gradual climb (above) through a series of vertical slots. Each slot (right) is designed to break the flowing current enough to allow the fish to rest before exiting into the river above the dam. Illustration by Duane Raver.

drainage by the year 2003. Virginia's portion is 415 miles and the Boshers Dam Fishway contributed 137.6 miles of that goal on the mainstem James that is, to date, the most free-flowing mainstem miles opened by a single fishway on the East Coast. All together, a total of 191 targeted miles are reopened in Virginia's por-



L Alan Weaver

spheric Administration (EPA/NOAA), grant that was passed through the Department to the City of Richmond, the current owner of the dam.

The James River Association, without whose efforts this project would not have been accomplished, spearheaded the fund raising effort. DGIF contributed significantly by providing project coordination and by obtaining and matching several federal grants. The City of Richmond also contributed substantial funds and personnel time as part of this three-agency team. Federal, state, city, county, corporate, foundation, and private individual

raise close to \$700,000 in a matter of months to keep the project alive. Several of the funding sources were "re-tapped" for additional funds (grants and donations) and the money was secured. Because of these events, it became very clear just how important this project really is to the James and to the Commonwealth.

The bid winning company, English Construction out of Lynchburg, broke ground in June of 1997. High water and abnormal flood frequency plagued the project in early 1998 causing the spring run of 1998 to be missed. This was quite disappointing to many that had been

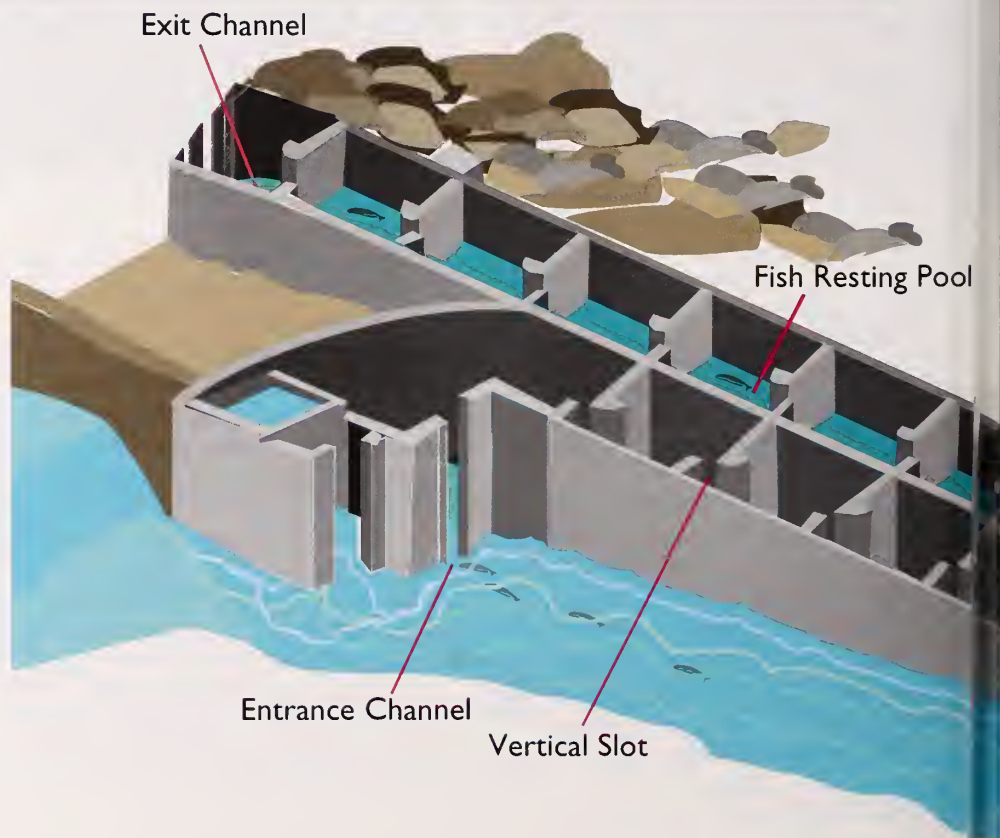
Fish passage estimates by species

based on passage rates observed at the Boshers Dam Fishway counting window during spring 1999 monitoring by VDGIF.

| Common name | Scientific name | Period Observed | Total 1999 Count | Passage Rate (fish/hr) | Season Estimate |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------------|-----------------|
| American shad | <i>Alosa sapidissima</i> | 5/5 to 5/22 | 16 | 0.68 | 185 |
| Sea lamprey | <i>Petromyzon marinus</i> | 4/9 to 5/6 | 5 | 0.14 | 54 |
| American eel | <i>Anguilla rostrata</i> | 5/8 to 5/12 | 4 | 0.59 | 44 |
| Gizzard shad | <i>Dorosoma cepedianum</i> | 4/6 to 5/26 | 1813 | 26.47 | 19,699 |
| Quillback carpsucker | <i>Carpionodes cyprinus</i> | 3/31 to 5/15 | 1845 | 32.09 | 21,111 |
| Shorthead redhorse | <i>Moxostoma macrolepidotum</i> | 3/31 to 5/13 | 401 | 7.86 | 4,936 |
| Northern hogsucker | <i>Hypentelium nigricans</i> | 3/20 to 5/22 | 16 | 0.17 | 152 |
| Fallfish | <i>Semotilus corporalis</i> | 4/6 to 5/15 | 22 | 1.1 | 149 |
| Longnose gar | <i>Lepisosteus osseus</i> | 5/8 to 5/20 | 5 | 0.24 | 70 |
| Bull chub | <i>Nocomis raneyi</i> | 4/6 to 5/15 | 27 | 0.51 | 292 |
| Largemouth bass | <i>Micropterus salmoides</i> | 3/31 to 5/13 | 18 | 0.38 | 235 |
| Smallmouth bass | <i>Micropterus dolomieu</i> | 3/31 to 5/26 | 808 | 11.46 | 9,463 |
| Bluegill | <i>Lepomis macrochirus</i> | 4/4 to 5/26 | 68 | 0.64 | 749 |
| Redbreast sunfish | <i>Lepomis auritus</i> | 3/4 to 5/26 | 68 | 0.64 | 749 |
| Channel catfish | <i>Ictalurus punctatus</i> | 4/9 to 5/22 | 58 | 1.05 | 671 |
| Blue catfish | <i>Ictalurus furcatus</i> | 5/6 to 5/6 | 1 | 0.17 | 2 |
| Common carp | <i>Cyprinus carpio</i> | 4/7 to 5/26 | 264 | 3.91 | 2,858 |
| Total No. Fish Passed | | | | | 61,419 |

waiting so long to see this project to its fruition. After the very wet start to 1998, conditions improved to near perfect for construction and the project was completed in time for spring 1999. The project went "on-line" on March 1, 1999 and was officially dedicated on April 20, 1999.

When the gate on the fish passage was finally raised the smooth flowing attraction water system began to draw fish away from the frothy, turbulent water and into the entrance channel. Fish then negotiate a series of 13 baffles and resting pools as they make their ascent. The term "vertical slot" refers to the 16" gap in the baffle wall that divides one pool from the next. Fish can easily swim through the vertical slots, gaining 9 inches, as they move from pool to





Robert B. Augustine III



L. Alan Weaver



Photographed through a special viewing window, biologists record numerous fish, which include species like the longnose gar (left), American shad (middle), and smallmouth bass.

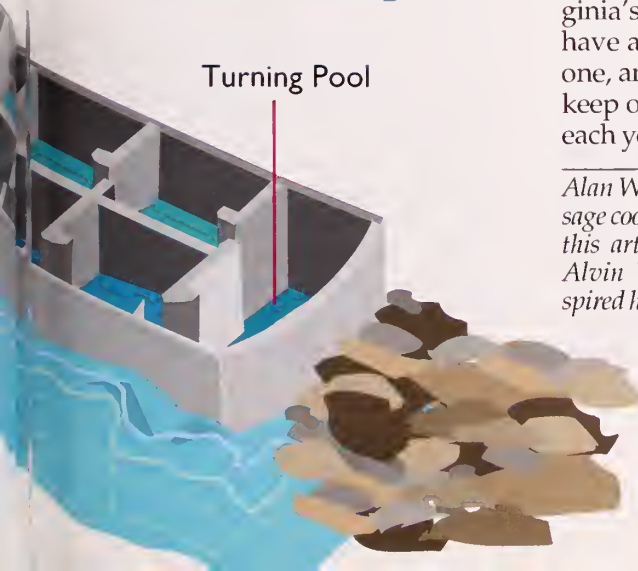
pool. When fish reach the upper end they move past a 4 foot wide by 7 foot high counting window before exiting into the river to continue migrating beyond the dam. There is also a trap just "upstream" of the window that allows for sample collection.

The Department then began a randomized monitoring program at the window in March and continued through early June to coincide with the typical shad and herring run from salt into fresh water. Although shad will move upstream at night, the majority of movement was expected during the day. Two people were assigned as counters in alternating shifts at the window during each session. Video was used to backup live counts and on several

The drawing below represents a Denil Fishway, which is the design used in the construction of the Boschers Dam Fishway on the James River. Illustration by Pels.

Vertical Slot Fishway

Turning Pool



occasions unattended video was substituted for live counts.

At least 17 species of fish were observed using the fishway. Season passage estimates were generated using daily passage rates for each species. River flows in spring 1999 were lower than average and this phenomenon may have resulted in a weaker run of American shad. However, the most important fact for the inaugural season is that the fishway worked as planned and the main target species, American shad, used the fishway.

The long and testing journey to complete construction is finally over and we are just now entering the exciting phase of this restoration effort. Monitoring will continue each spring to contribute to the evaluation of the recovery of shad and herring in the James River. We are on the right track toward restoring these ecologically important fish that are so deeply rooted in Virginia's culture and economy. We still have a long way to go, but we built one, and they came! Let's hope they keep on coming in greater numbers each year. □

Alan Weaver is the Department's fish passage coordinator. He would like to dedicate this article in memory of his father, L. Alvin Weaver, who supported and inspired his work on this project.

The following is a list of the additional major contributors: Commonwealth of Virginia, County of Henrico, Environmental Protection Agency, Chesapeake Bay Program, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Marine Fisheries Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Virginia Marine Resources Commission, Virginia Saltwater Recreational Fishing Development Fund, Marine Fishing Improvement Fund, A Private Richmond Foundation, Ruth Camp Campbell Foundation, CSX Corporation, Ethyl Cor-



©Duane Raver

poration, The Flagler Foundation, The Friendship Fund, Herndon Foundation, Massey Foundation, The Mary Morton Parsons Foundation, Elis Olsson Memorial Foundation, Philip Morris, U.S.A., Richard S. Reynolds Foundation, Virginia Environmental Endowment, and several other private foundations, corporations, anglers, conservationists, and individuals.



Journal



Virginia's Hunters for the Hungry Releases a Timely Print

by Anne E. Denby

With the frozen form of precipitation we had falling all over the Commonwealth this winter, many of you may have experienced the beautiful sight of a buck standing in the snow. Now you can treasure that memory everyday with the Hunters for the Hungry's newest limited edition print by artist Randy Battaglia. The 18" x 24" limited edition art print, "Thunder Ridge," is signed and numbered by the artist. Proceeds from its sale goes to support Hunters for the Hungry. The print sells for \$30.00 plus \$3.00 shipping and handling.

Hunters for the Hungry is a non-profit organization that has been in operation since 1991. From its inception, it has been utilizing meat donated by the generosity of deer hunters who provide meat and monetary gifts, and vendors who reduce their fees to process and distribute venison to the needy people of Virginia. Through the years, the program has distributed over 950,000 pounds of meat and in 1999 broke an all-time record by produc-

ing 182,603 pounds of nutritious meat, which was received, processed, and distributed.

To process a whole deer costs about \$30 and additional money is needed to distribute the meat. "Our biggest obstacle is simply raising the funds to defray the costs," said David Horne, one of the organization's founders. "Thunder Ridge" is the second print in a series which will encompass all four seasons. The first print, "Manley's Field," is still available. Each print sold will allow 50 pounds of protein-rich deer meat to be distributed to someone in need. To order contact, Hunters for the Hungry at P.O. Box 304, Big Island, VA 24526 or call 1-800-352-4868. □



(Left to right) Carson H. Altizer, The Honorable Virgil H. Goode, Jr., and Lt. Karl P. Martin.

Altizer Named Officer of the Year

Carson H. Altizer, a game warden with the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, (DGIF) was presented the 1999 Officer of the Year award by the Southern States Boating Law Administrators Association (SSBLA) this past December. The Honorable Virgil H. Goode, Jr.,

5th District Congressman, presented the award for Virginia. He was also presented with a letter of commendation from Congressman Goode and a U.S. flag for his outstanding efforts in boating law enforcement. The SSBLA Award was one of 13 presented for outstanding service in boating law enforcement in the southern states in 1999.

Officer Altizer, age 26, is stationed in Franklin County, Virginia, and his primary duties in boating work are on Smith Mountain Lake, a 20,600-acre lake with 500 mile of shoreline in central Virginia. In addition to his efforts in boating safety education and enforcement, Officer Altizer has been involved with three major boat theft investigations on Smith Mountain Lake over the past three years. All three investigations involved multi-jurisdictional efforts and resulted in felony convictions for the offenders.

"Officer Altizer's outstanding service in boating safety and enforcement greatly enhances public safety and enjoyment of the recreation resources on Smith Mountain Lake," said Lt. Karl P. Martin, District Supervisor for Region 2. □

2000 Outdoor Photography Workshops

It's 7:00 Friday evening and the room is crowded with folks, their cameras, and paraphernalia. Most are there alone, but all have two common interests, wanting to learn more about photography and about the great outdoors.

Bill and Linda Lane, two of the country's premier wildlife and nature photographers, give a series of photographic workshops,

which are open to the public. They have been conducting these workshops annually for the past 15 years, they are taught in Virginia, West Virginia, and Tennessee.

This year the participants are in for a real treat. Each workshop will include personal instructions, hands-on fieldwork, photo critiques, and slide shows. The Lanes will emphasize the importance of exposure and share their philosophy of making photography fun and easy while still capturing the moment you want. Food is also a highlight of the workshops and the Lanes take a personal interest to insure each attendee does not leave hungry. All this, along with good conversation and camaraderie, makes for a great weekend experience.

For further information call the Lanes at (804) 883-7740. For reservations only call Virginia State Parks at 1-800-933-PARK or in Richmond call 225-3867.

Schedule for the 2000 Photography Workshops include:

The Great Smokey Mountains, Gatlinburg, Tennessee – April 17–21

Westmoreland State Park, Montross, Virginia – May 5–7

Watoga State Park, Marlinton, West Virginia – May 19–21

Douthat State Park, Clifton Forge, Virginia – September 22–24

Hungry Mother State Park, Marion, Virginia – October 6–8

False Cape State Park, Sandbridge, Virginia – October 20–22

Chincoteague, Eastern Shore, Virginia, – November 3–5

Write Target

by Lee Watts, Information Services

The 2000 spring gobbler season begins April 8th and closes May 13th. Hunting is limited to half-hour before sunrise until noon, Monday through Saturday. You are not required to wear blaze orange during this season, but we strongly encourage you to wear blaze orange while entering and exiting the woods or

while hunting. Below are two of the most commonly asked questions concerning turkey hunting.

Can I use a .22 rifle to hunt turkeys?

Yes, rifles are legal during spring gobbler season. You may use a rifle to hunt turkeys in all counties where rifles are legal. If you hunt with a shotgun, the largest shot allowed for spring gobbler hunting is #2 fine shot

Please check the hunting law digest for other firearm restrictions. Firearm Ordinances are listed on pages 27-32 of the hunting regulations. Or, you can find that information on line at <http://www.dgif.state.va.us/hunting/regs99/section6.html#local>

(Please bookmark our main web page, www.dgif.state.va.us for future reference. The link above will be removed after July 1st, when the 2000-2001 hunting seasons are posted. You can always find the online hunting law digest under the heading "Hunting" from the main web page. The link to "Local Firearm Ordinances" can be found in the Table of contents of the online digest.)

Where is the best place to go spring gobbler hunting?

The top counties east of the Blue Ridge (by the number of turkeys harvested per square mile of forest) are: Westmoreland (1.37), Northumberland (1.28), Lancaster (1.28), Middlesex (1.12), Bedford (1.10), and King George (0.98). The top counties west of the Blue Ridge are: Grayson (1.14), Floyd (0.96), Franklin (0.88), Scott (0.80), and Carroll (0.72).

These averages are based on the number of forested acres, not total birds harvested. Larger counties will normally have a larger harvest total. By taking the number of birds harvested and dividing by the number of forested acres, you will get a better idea of the population density of turkey across the Commonwealth and those counties where you have a better chance to bag a gobbler.

Have a question? Need a regulation clarified? Need to know more about what the Department does?

Send your questions or inquiries to:

WriteOn Target

P.O. Box 11104

Richmond, VA. 23230-1104

You can reach us by calling (804) 367-9369 or via email at WriteOnTarget@dgif.state.va.us. Your question could appear in a future issue of *Virginia Wildlife*. □

Operation Spruce-Up Photography Competition and Exhibition

Richmond Camera, the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, and the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries is sponsoring the "Operation Spruce-Up" Photography Contest. It is a statewide, juried photo competition and is free to enter. People of all ages are encouraged to enter their favorite photos in one of the contest's categories. This annual photo event's goal is to continually raise the awareness of Operation Spruce-Up, which is a statewide, volunteer cleanup of Virginia's lands.

Operation Spruce-Up officially begins April 1 and ends April 30, although events are scheduled March through May. Organizations and individuals will gather to pick up trash, plant trees, construct hiking paths, and complete many other outdoor projects. Participants are encouraged to take photographs of their events, especially photos of the volunteers at work. The deadline for entering this contest is May 31, and photos can be delivered to any Richmond Camera location or mailed to the Department of Conservation and Recreation.

The photo contest has two categories. They are *stewardship* and *scenic*. A total of 12 images will be selected by juror Lee Walker to represent the Operation Spruce-Up Photo Exhibit. For more information, call Bonnie Phillips at (804) 786-5056 or 1-800-933-PARK. Or visit our website at <http://www.state.va.us/~dcr/temp/opersu.htm>. □



Naturally Wild



story and illustration by Spike Knuth

Yellow Perch

The yellow perch is a member of the family *percidae*, which includes the walleye, sauger, and a multitude of darters—those small, colorful fish of the streams and rivers. Some of its common local names include ringed perch, or raccoon perch. The white perch is not a relative, but is a member of the true bass family (*morone*).

Yellow perch have stiff, hard spines on their dorsals, which are rounded and when they fan out they are somewhat reminiscent of the dorsal of a sailfish. They have what are called ctenoid scales, which feel like sandpaper when you brush your hand along its sides. Yellow perch are basically dark-green, to olive-green with golden sides and white belly barred with 6 to 8 vertical bars. They have bright orange fins, especially during spawning.

They commonly reach 14–15 inches and weights of 1½ to 2 pounds in some Virginia waters, although 6 to 8 inches is average.

Perch are early spring spawners and they begin running upriver to

spawn in late February. The female lays her eggs in long encased gelatinous ribbons or tubes, which are fertilized by the males at the same time they are released.

Yellow perch are adaptable to a wide variety of habitat, from small ponds and medium-sized lakes to large reservoirs, slow-moving rivers and brackish waters. They favor sandy, rocky, or marl bottoms over low-growing weeds like coontail, fanwort, and milfoil.

The best bait by far for catching perch are minnows, but they'll hit

small spoons, and tiny jigs and streamers, especially if tipped with pork rind bits and other bait. Fish a little slower for them than other species because they move fairly slow, and are cautious biters.

Some of the best waters for perch are the Chickahominy River and Reservoir, New River, Claytor Lake, Lake Moomaw, Waller Mill, Little Creek Reservoir (Toano), the Mataponi River, and the Potomac River and many of its tributaries. □





On The Water

by Jim Crosby, Region 4 Boater Education Coordinator

The Quiet Ones!

What is the quietest, oldest, and most basic mode of transportation on the water? The canoe or kayak—those muscle powered boats that skim across the water with a minimum of noise. Highly recommended for wildlife viewing, they don't chase the target of your interest away, before you get close enough to observe it. A skilled paddler can pull the craft around without even a noisy splash to interrupt a hypnotic mood of peace and tranquillity. Canoeing and/or kayaking can be described as an ideal human pursuit—exercise for the body and a tranquilizer for the mind.

What's the difference between them? While canoeing is usually shared with another, the kayak offers a solo adventure.

With muscle powered boats as one of the few exceptions, most recreational boats operate on gasoline and use oil and grease to ease the way. All petroleum products have tremendous pollution potential due to their toxic effect on marine plants and animals. Many lakes and waterways prohibit the use of gasoline powered watercraft which makes the smaller, muscle powered boats even more popular.

Of course, they're also one of the least expensive ways for the outdoorsman to get out on the water too. A good canoe or kayak will cost about the same as a small outboard motor; and you can pop them on top of your car, or in the back of a pickup. This saves the cost of a trailer that's generally required for any other type of boat, as well.

For the really lazy, one can even find a square stern canoe and attach a small electric motor which will still

offer quiet propulsion. Also, an ideal setup for the handicapped canoeist

Many people talk about the "tippy canoe." Let me tell you: A canoe is not tipsy by nature. A free-floating canoe without human cargo will not tip, even in very rough water. It takes us humans to tip a canoe because we want to sit up on them instead of down in them. Weight kept low and on the centerline will make a canoe very stable. Canoeing is just like any sport, or recreational activity. It requires committed practice for proper skill development.

Federal and state law requires you to have a "wearable, personal flotation device" (life jacket) for every person on board, plus a throwable device, if the vessel is 16 feet or longer. In a canoe/kayak, you should always wear your life jacket all buckled, or zipped up, just as the manufacturer recommends. Canoeists do end up in the water more

often than other boaters, and if you're not wearing your life jacket, it will likely float away to be lost and of no use to you, whatsoever.

Learn to swim before you step into a canoe. The life jacket is not a reasonable substitute for not knowing how to swim. Its added buoyancy will aid you in the water, but swimming skills are still the basic ingredient for water safety. Your life jacket should also have a whistle attached so you can attract attention should you need it. Along with your life jacket, you should consider head protection in rough water, and clothing appropriate to the air and water temperature. Heat exhaustion and hypothermia are two other life threatening extremes that can be found canoeing which can be avoided by wearing protective clothing.

If muscle boats hold any interest for you, let me suggest your first step. Get some good training and knowledge. It will not only make your recreational use more enjoyable, but it will also add a dimension of safety that you will need to continue enjoying the sport in the future.

The best sources of information and training available can come from the following:

The American Canoe Association
7432 Alban Station Blvd.,
Suite B-232
Springfield, VA 22150-2311
(703) 451-0141

Your Local Chapter Of The
American Red Cross

Check your local directory
United States Canoe Association
P.O. Box 5743
Lafayette, IN 47903 □



©Dwight Dyke

RECIPES

by Joan Cone

A Wild Turkey Meal

Wild turkeys are flourishing in Virginia, and many are appearing on hunters' tables. Whenever asked how to cook a wild turkey, I always suggest roasting it in a Reynold's Oven Bag.

When you purchase the turkey size Reynold's Oven Bags, there are directions for cooking wild turkey. The enclosed recipe brochure reads as follows: "Same as domestic turkey above, but if skinless, add $\frac{1}{4}$ cup water and brush with extra oil or butter."

Should you have leftover wild turkey, use it in the salad recipe below.

Menu

Mushroom-Potato Soup
Turkey To Get Wild About
Mexican Corn Bread
Chocolate Fudge Pie

Mushroom-Potato Soup

- 2 tablespoons butter or margarine
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 1 stalk celery, chopped
- 1 package (8 ounces) sliced fresh mushrooms
- 2 cups peeled and diced red potato
- 2 cups chicken broth
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon dried thyme
- 2 cups milk, divided
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 3 tablespoons flour

Melt butter in a large Dutch oven. Add onion, celery, and mushrooms. Cook, stirring frequently, until tender. Stir in potato, chicken broth, and thyme. Bring to a boil; reduce heat and simmer, uncovered, for 30 minutes or until potatoes are tender. Stir in $\frac{1}{2}$ cups milk, salt, and pepper. Combine remaining $\frac{1}{2}$ cup milk and flour, stirring until smooth. Stir into

soup and simmer, uncovered, stirring frequently, until slightly thickened. Makes $1\frac{1}{2}$ quarts.

Turkey to Get Wild About

Marika Byrd, with the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, has developed this excellent recipe.

- 4 cups cooked, cubed roasted turkey
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup chopped spring onion (optional)
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup chopped celery
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped walnuts
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup raisins
- $\frac{2}{3}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ cup chopped sweet apple (peeled or unpeeled)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{2}{3}$ cup mayonnaise and sour cream in equal parts
- Curry powder to taste
- Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

Place turkey, onions, celery, nuts, raisins, and apple in a large bowl and lightly toss to distribute evenly. Mix mayonnaise and sour cream with curry powder, salt and pepper.

Stir dressing over turkey mixture. Place salad in refrigerator for 4 to 5 hours or overnight before serving on lettuce leaves. Serves 6 to 8.

Mexican Corn Bread

- 1 can (8 $\frac{1}{2}$ ounces) cream-style corn
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup yellow cornmeal
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon soda
- 1 teaspoon salt
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup milk
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup melted margarine or butter
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup grated sharp cheddar cheese, divided
- 1 can (4 ounces) mild, diced chilies
- 2 tablespoons margarine or butter

Preheat oven to 400°F. Combine corn, eggs, cornmeal, soda, salt, milk, melted margarine, half of cheese, and chilies to suit your taste. Beat well. Put 2 tablespoons margarine into a 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ -quart casserole. Place casserole in oven until margarine is hot, not brown. Pour in mixture and sprinkle with remaining cheese. Bake 40 minutes or a little longer. Serves 6 to 8.

Chocolate Fudge Pie

- 3 large eggs
- 1 cup sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup butter or margarine, melted
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup unsweetened cocoa
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup flour
- $\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup chopped pecans

Whisk together eggs and sugar in a large bowl. Add butter and next 4 ingredients, stirring until blended. Stir in pecans and spoon into a lightly greased 9-inch pie plate. Bake in a 350°F. oven for 25 to 30 minutes. Mixture will rise, then fall as it cools. Serve with a scoop of vanilla ice cream. □



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